

(*Copy with attachments)

27 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence
THROUGH: DDI Planning Officer
SUBJECT: Priority Ranking of NIS Contracts for
Budget Purposes

In making judgments and recommending rankings of the external research contracts for NIS production as a basis for proposing selective eliminations to satisfy budget cuts, I am forced to face the question - Why the NIS? Is this the only program in the Directorate of Intelligence that can be looked to as a source for funds?

If there is a deep-seated feeling against programed basic intelligence -- that it is not responsive to U.S. Governmental needs or that there are better ways of meeting those needs -- a more enlightened approach would be a full-scale investigation to determine just how much basic intelligence the Government requires and what the most useful format is for making it available. Every effort has been expended over the past three years to examine the usefulness of this program, to identify its weaknesses and correct them, to reduce the overall coverage of the program, to get USIB approval of that coverage plan, and to streamline, combine, and treat more selectively many sections of the NIS. This effort has been aimed at making the producers, consumers and managers of the program realistically face the facts of reduced operating budgets, the need to reduce long production and processing time, an apparent (but not actual) duplication by the NIS of departmental basic intelligence, and the growing trend in thinking by some that the bulk of the intelligence needs of the Government can be answered by ad hoc problem-oriented quick responses.

The net effect of serious fund cutting for the NIS would be the elimination of parts of an established and well recognized program, whose distribution and use are matters of record, and whose content is systematically changed to meet changing requirements. It has been a

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program of demonstrable value for the entire U.S. Government; much of the collection effort of the Government has been organized around the NIS Program for the last 20 years and serious gaps in our knowledge have been filled by such programed production. If these are not good and sufficient reasons for continuing the NIS effort at its present level, then what is a justification for a major intelligence effort?

From a budget high of [REDACTED] in FY 63 - the 25X1A1a
program has been reduced to about \$ [REDACTED] in FY 68. (this 25X1A1a
does not fully measure the actual cutback of the lessened
purchasing power of the 1968 dollar).

Every examination of the NIS Program (6 major surveys since the 1950's) has taken its toll of the original coverage concept of the program, as approved by NSCID #3. These program reductions intensified by recurring economy cuts raise the serious question of how much more the concept of programed basic intelligence via the NIS route can take before such a concept loses its integrity and we must start all over again to create a new program to do what the NIS is already accomplishing.

My formal response on the subject is attached.

JAMES A. BRAMMELL

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Director

Basic and Geographic Intelligence

Attachment

cc: DDI Planning Officer

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- Orig & 1 - Addressee
- 1 - as stated above
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25X1A9a ED/OBGI: [REDACTED] :ek/3595(27 May 68)

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